

**Testimony of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority
Before the Planning & Development Committee
Re: SB 394 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE
CONNECTICUT RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY
March 10, 2010**

Good morning, Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Tom Kirk and I am the President of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority and we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding SB 394 AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE CONNECTICUT RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY.

As you are aware, the General Assembly re-configured CRRA, its Board of Directors, and its management in 2002 after the Enron debacle. The thoughtful re-configuration of the Board and CRRA made sense then and its current configuration makes sense now. One goal of the re-created Board was to have more municipal oversight and you did that by ensuring more representation of chief elected officials from across the state to look after municipal interests and that has been accomplished. We continue to operate in the best interest of the towns. The General Assembly also wisely ensured that some Board members would be required to have experience and expertise in the areas of the environment, public sector or corporate finance or business and industry, and in the energy field.

CRRA functions as an open and transparent quasi-public agency. All of our Board of Directors meetings are open to the public where anybody can come and provide comments and share their views and ideas with the Board of Directors and its management directly. We post all of our agendas and minutes on-line at www.crra.org along with an enormous amount of other helpful information on CRRA, its history, disposal and recycling tonnages by town, and how we operate. We also provide numerous monthly, quarterly and annual reports to the Governor, the General Assembly and the Department of Environmental Protection in accordance with state statutes.

The Authority continues its ongoing programs of outreach to Mid-Connecticut Project cities and towns and other community groups and is always working to communicate with its host communities. For example, the Mid-Connecticut Project has an active and engaged Municipal Advisory Committee comprised of chief elected officials of every customer town (70 towns) that provides input to CRR's Mid-Connecticut Project including its disposal fees. Some of our other outreach programs and activities include:

- A special committee to study future disposal options that consists of chief elected officials from East Hartford, Hartford, Canton, Windsor Locks and Barkhamsted along with five representatives from CRRA.
- CRRA has hosted an annual meeting every year for the past six years for all of its member towns to gain feedback from the towns, provide updates to the CEOs on current activities, and share future planning efforts.

- Authority officials participate in numerous Council of Government meetings on a regular basis throughout the state
- CRRA often hosts the Capitol Region Council of Governments monthly meetings at its recycling educational facility ("Trash Museum") in Hartford.
- Hosts Connecticut Recyclers Coalition regular meetings at its recycling educational facility ("Trash Museum") in Hartford.
- Provide and staff booth exhibits at the annual conventions of both the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and the Council of Small Towns (COST)

CRRA and its Mid-Connecticut Project have recovered from the Enron debacle and have kept disposal fees reasonable, stable and low. The Mid-Connecticut Project towns are not charged for processing their recyclables while participants of other waste-to-energy projects are; in fact, the Mid-Connecticut Project towns receive rebates to towns of up to \$10 per ton for every ton of recyclables they deliver. We have also been in the forefront of electronics recycling during the past decade collecting more than two million pounds of obsolete electronics for recycling from its towns and their residents. We also educate more than 50,000 people, mostly school age children, at our two museums and educational facilities located in Hartford and Stratford where we teach "reduce, re-use and recycle."

Additionally, we continue to move recycling ahead into the 21st century with single-stream recycling and have worked with our towns and their haulers on this issue, most notably the City of Hartford which has seen tremendous success with single-stream recycling.

We are happy to continue to work with the Mayors and First Selectmen of all of our towns on these important solid waste issues, however, it is not clear what is trying to be accomplished with this legislation.

We are looking forward to providing the Mid-Connecticut Project towns the best, lowest cost disposal and recycling options when the current town contracts expire in 2012 and are in the process of preparing draft contracts for those towns to review in the coming months.

Finally, we would like to point out that CRRA's Mid-Connecticut Project and Southeast Project still have outstanding bonds. A recent OLR report entitled "Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority: Responsibilities, Liabilities, and Other Issues" noted that the "state has contingent liability for some of those bonds through the Special Capital Reserve Fund (SCRF). Dissolving or reorganizing CRRA would require satisfying those bond obligations secured by SCRF. It might also create a "moral obligation" for the state to satisfy the bonds that are not secured by SCRF."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 394 and I would be happy to answer any questions.